

# BENEFITS NEWS

An Information Publication for State of California Employees

## February is Heart Month

February is National Heart Month, so it seems like a good time to ask, what comes to mind when you hear the phrase “heart attack?”

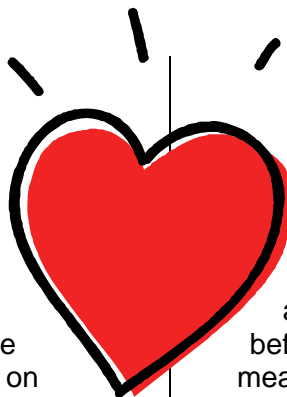
People of a certain age may think of Redd Foxx’s portrayal of Fred Sanford on “Sanford and Son.” In the 1970s, Foxx could be seen regularly on TV clutching his chest as he faked a heart attack and shouted to his deceased wife, “This is the big one! Hang on, Elizabeth, I’m coming to join you!”

This may have made for funny television, but that type of scene plays right into society’s misperception that only elderly men suffer from heart disease or stroke.

Here’s a statistic for you: While heart disease and stroke kill one in every 3.7 men, one in 2.4 women lose their lives to heart disease and stroke. They are the No. 1 and No. 3 killers of women. By way of comparison, breast cancer kills one in 29 women.

Perhaps ever more staggering is the fact that a majority of women don’t know how deadly heart disease and stroke are.

That’s why the American Heart Association is celebrating National Heart Month with a series of Go Red For Women events. The Go Red For Women campaign funds research around women and heart disease and stroke, and it aims to educate women so that they can lead longer, healthier lives.



### Heart Attack Warning Signs

Some heart attacks are sudden and intense – the “movie heart attack,” where no one doubts what’s happening. But most heart attacks start slowly, with mild pain or discomfort. Often people affected aren’t sure what’s wrong and wait too long before getting help. Here are signs that can mean a heart attack is happening:

- **Chest discomfort.** Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.
- **Discomfort in other areas of the upper body.** Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw, or stomach.
- **Shortness of breath.** May occur with or without chest discomfort.
- **Other signs:** These may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea, or lightheadedness.

*As with men, women’s most common heart attack symptom is chest pain or discomfort.* But women are somewhat more likely than men to experience some of the other common symptoms, particularly shortness of breath, nausea/vomiting, and back or jaw pain.

If you or someone you’re with has chest discomfort, especially with one or more of the other signs, don’t wait longer than a few minutes (no more than 5) before calling for help. Call 9-1-1...get to a hospital right away.

Calling 9-1-1 is almost always the fastest way to get lifesaving treatment. Emergency medical services staff can begin treatment when they arrive – up to an hour sooner than if someone gets to the hospital by car. The staff are also trained to revive someone whose heart has stopped. Patients with chest pain who arrive by ambulance usually receive faster treatment at the hospital, too.

If you can't access the emergency medical services (EMS), have someone drive you to the hospital right away. If you're the one having symptoms, don't drive yourself, unless you have absolutely no other option.

For more information about heart disease and your risk factors, visit [www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org).

## **Start!**

Start! is an American Heart Association movement calling on all Americans and their employers to live longer, more heart-healthy lives through walking and other healthy habits.

Heart disease is the No. 1 killer of American men and women. One factor that raises the risk of this devastating disease is physical inactivity, yet 70 percent of Americans fail to get enough exercise.

Participating in a program of regular physical activity can help significantly reduce the risk of dying from heart disease. Physical activity also reduces the likelihood of suffering from other risk factors related to inactivity, such as high blood pressure, obesity and diabetes. In fact, every single hour of regular exercise can add two hours to your life.

Regular physical activity has also been shown to improve employee alertness and productivity and decrease healthcare costs. That's why the American Heart Association is inviting companies to take an active role in reducing employees' risks of heart disease by participating in the Start! program.

To get your department involved in the Start! program or to participate in the program individually, visit [www.americanheart.org/start](http://www.americanheart.org/start).

## **For More Information**

### **DPA Benefits Division**

(916) 322-0300 ♦ CNET 492-0300

### **ARAG Group**

#### **Group Legal Services Plan**

1-800-247-4184

### **Dental Program**

(916) 324-0525 ♦ CNET 454-0525

### **Employee Assistance Program**

#### **MHN (Managed Health Network)**

1-866-327-4762

### **FlexElect Program**

(916) 327-6429 ♦ CNET 467-6429

### **Health Promotion Program**

(916) 324-9398 ♦ CNET 454-9398

### **Merit Award Program**

(916) 324-0522 ♦ CNET 454-0522

### **Pre-Tax Parking**

(916) 324-0526 ♦ CNET 454-0526

### **Rural Health Care Program**

(916) 327-1439 ♦ CNET 467-1439

### **Savings Plus Program**

1-866-566-4777

[www.sppforu.com](http://www.sppforu.com)

### **Travel & Relocation and**

#### **Vanpool Programs**

(916) 324-0526 ♦ CNET 454-0526

### **Vision Service Plan**

1-800-877-7195

### **Workers' Compensation Program**

(916) 445-9792 ♦ CNET 485-9792

## **DPA Fax Numbers**

### **Benefits Division**

(916) 322-3769 ♦ CNET 492-3769

### **Savings Plus Program**

(916) 327-1885 ♦ CNET 467-1885

### **TDD (Any unit in DPA)**

(916) 327-4266 ♦ CNET 467-4266

## **Internet Address**

[www.dpa.ca.gov](http://www.dpa.ca.gov)